

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 3-14 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as anticipated by "Manfrotto product web pages."

The rejection is again respectfully traversed. No certified translation of the specification is required for national stage of an international application. See 35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2), MPEP 1893.01(d). A national stage of an international application has the same effect as a national application except with regard to 35 U.S.C. 102(e). See 35 U.S.C. 363, MPEP 1893.03(b).

Accordingly, the filing date of the present application for 35 U.S.C. 102(a) analysis is the international application filing date of December 30, 2002, as indicated in the Notice of Acceptance. See also MPEP 1896 (comparison table between national and international applications).

In summary, the present application is a U.S. national stage of a PCT application filed on December 30, 2002. The Manfrotto product web pages bear a handwritten date of December 30, 2003, so that they are not available as reference under section 102(a).

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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